



Reasonable Expenses and Reimbursement Policy

Major changes to this document: Rebrand.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish what constitutes 'reasonable' expenses and the circumstances under which reimbursement of expenses will be made.

2.0 Principles underpinning the policy

2.1 Accountability and transparency

It is important that the use of expense accounts and the reimbursement of expenses is, and is seen to be, accountable and transparent, both within Multicultural Australia and in the wider community.

Other than where the payment of a fixed allowance has been authorised, Directors, staff or volunteers incurring authorised expenditure must present all relevant original receipts, invoices, vouchers, tickets, or other evidence of such expenditure when seeking reimbursement. Where such evidence is for any reason lacking statutory declarations may be sought.

2.2 Perceptions and expectations

It is important to consider both public perceptions and community expectations in the use of expense accounts and the reimbursement of expenses. The range and type of expenses paid must be clearly and specifically stated and decision-making on expenditure must be consistent, fully transparent and acceptable, both within Multicultural Australia and to the wider community.

2.3 No private benefit to be derived

All reimbursement of expenses must be for legitimate business purposes only. Other than where the payment of a fixed allowance has been authorised, reimbursements should only cover actual costs and no individual should gain personal funds as a result of an expenses claim.

Spouses, partners and family members of Multicultural Australia Directors, staff and/or volunteers are not entitled to receive any reimbursement of expenses, unless they are one of our employees conducting our businesses.

2.4 Equity and participation

The allocation and reimbursement of expenses must be non-discriminatory and provide an opportunity for full participation, as appropriate, by all Directors, staff and volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds, and be sufficiently inclusive to ensure participation of under-represented groups.

3.0 Scope of Policy

Expenses which are an eligible cost within program guidelines are covered by our [Financial](#) and [Decision-Making Delegations](#).

This policy covers expenses and reimbursement in relation to the following items:

3.1 Professional development, including conference attendance

We are committed to the professional development of both staff and Directors.

An annual budget will be set for staff training and professional development, together with the identification of organisational professional development priorities. The training/professional

development priorities for each staff member will be discussed and decided through the performance appraisal process.

An annual budget will be set for the professional development of Directors. Board professional development priorities include promoting good governance and assisting the Board to meet its key performance indicators (KPIs), as set out in the [Board Charter](#).

3.2 Travel, accommodation and meals while away from home on business

Travel and accommodation must be approved in advance using the [Travel Proposal Form](#).

Travel and accommodation will generally be booked by us, unless there is an overriding reason why the booking must be made by the individual concerned.

Where an individual is responsible for booking their own travel and accommodation, they will be reimbursed for the most direct and economical mode of travel available and for moderate accommodation expenses, considering all of the circumstances. Individuals will not be reimbursed for additional costs incurred by taking indirect routes or making stopovers for personal reasons, nor for items of a personal nature charged to a hotel account.

When accommodation is provided in private accommodation (i.e. provided by a friend or relative) an overnight accommodation allowance may be claimed. Please see the [Travel Proposal Form](#) for the current amount of allowances payable.

The cost of meals and incidental expenses incurred while away from home on Multicultural Australia business will be met by the provision of allowances which are in line with the acceptable amounts published annually by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Please see the [Travel Proposal Form](#) for the current amount of allowances payable. Allowances for meals, incidentals and private accommodation may be claimed and paid in advance.

3.3 Other travel expenditure

Use of an employee's own vehicle for work-related travel, subject to prior approval, will be reimbursed by way of an all-inclusive mileage allowance at a given rate.

The issue of taxi vouchers to staff is covered by our [Financial Delegations Policy](#) and [Decision-Making Delegations](#).

Taxi vouchers may be issued to Directors to facilitate attendance at Board meetings, advisory committee meetings and Multicultural Australia functions.

3.4 Hospitality

Directors or staff members will be reimbursed for appropriate hospitality expenses incurred in the course of our businesses.

Appropriate hospitality expenses include the costs associated with events hosted or sponsored for the purpose of promoting our work or enhancing its image, and meals involving external stakeholders and/or volunteer Directors that are related to the transaction of our businesses. A reasonable beverage bill with dinner is an acceptable expense.

Where more than one Multicultural Australia Director or staff member is present at an event or meal while on Multicultural Australia business, as outlined above, it is appropriate for the senior person (if any) to arrange payment and submit the claim for reimbursement.

Where staff members choose to discuss work-related matters in a social setting (e.g. over lunch) this is considered a private expense and no reimbursement is payable.

3.5 Team Building Activities

An annual budget will be set for each staff team, based on the number of team members, for the purpose of arranging team building activities.

When deciding on the nature and timing of team building activities, as far as is possible, the activities must allow for the participation of the whole team and should take account of factors such as cultural norms and values, levels of ability and any caring responsibilities of team members.

Team building activities must also be purposeful and be structured around processes that have tangible team building outcomes.

Expenditure on team building activities will be delegated to Senior Managers through the [Financial](#) and [Decision-Making Delegations](#).

3.6 Other Reasonable Expenses

Directors and staff members may claim reimbursement for the following items, subject to prior approval:

- The cost of work-related telephone calls made on private home or mobile telephones
- Other Multicultural Australia related expenses, subject to prior approval to expend, e.g. copies of photos, purchase of resource materials etc.

4.0 Management of policy area

The policy area will be managed by the Chief Finance Officer.

5.0 Implementing the policy and monitoring compliance

We will provide information, training and support to our staff, volunteers, Directors and others, as appropriate, to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills required to comply with and implement this policy and any related procedures.

Information and training may be provided internally, e.g. through induction training, organisational updates, staff meetings etc. Records of attendance will be kept where internal information or training sessions are held. Compliance with the policy and related procedures will be monitored by the Finance Team.

6.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed not less than annually to ensure its effectiveness. The policy may be reviewed more frequently in the event of major changes to contractual obligations and/or relevant legislation.

7.0 Related documents

- [Financial Delegation Policy](#)
- [Decision-Making Delegations](#)
- [Board Charter](#)
- [Employee Reimbursement Form](#)
- [Client Reimbursement Form](#)
- [Travel Proposal Form](#)
- Board Travel Policy

8.0 Definitions

Expenses - Expenses are payments made by Multicultural Australia to cover necessary costs or charges that have been paid or incurred by Directors and staff in the course of their work or duties on behalf of us. These payments are not regarded as salary. Expenses may be either reimbursed to the individual that has incurred the expense or paid direct by us.

Reasonable – A 'reasonable' expense is one that would be considered fair, economical, responsible and acceptable in the circumstances. For us, it is important to consider what a 'reasonable expense' is in the context of being a not-for-profit, non-government organisation which is operating in a for-profit environment. Sound judgement must be exercised in determining what is 'reasonable' in terms of both the overall amount of money allocated for expenses and the types of expense that may be incurred.